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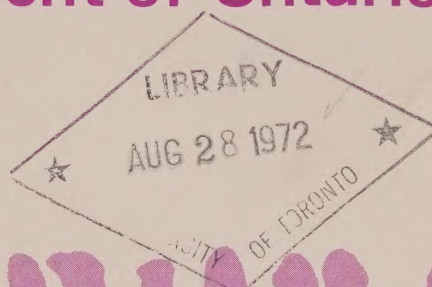
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THE PUBLIC BUREAUCRACY AND THE POSSIBILITY OF CITIZEN
INVOLVEMENT IN THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

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Prepared for

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I. INTRODUCTION

What are the prospects during the forthcoming decade for a significantly more participant executive/bureaucratic system, and a similarly participant policy-making process in the Government of Ontario?

Bertram Gross cautioned in a recently published paper against sweeping optimism which characteristically accompanies new theories of participatory democracy and participatory decision-making. He argued that participation cannot be naively grafted upon the existing political power relationships without causing "a grotesque distortion that could destroy its essential humanism", and that only a

fundamental and radical re-structuring of power that provides new kinds of participation in the allocation and use of resources and includes major extensions of public control over private sectors, major institutional change, and institutional reconstruction, new group coalitions, and a considerable strengthening of the legislature

could justify a measure of optimism.

Clearly, such new forms of political participation do not refer to the traditional, election-oriented citizen activity exemplified by constituency organizing, party membership and support, voting, etc. Rather they focus on a wider, more open access to the public decisional units which form part of the central policy-making apparatus. In the Government of Ontario, they

1. Bertram M. Gross, "Planning in an Era of Social Revolution"; Public Administration Review, May/June, 1971; pp. 288-289.

mean a wider, more open **access** to Cabinet, to Cabinet committees, to policy secretariats, to coordinating agencies, and generally to the upper strata of the executive/bureaucratic establishment.

In this paper I will attempt to analyze and offer tentative answers to the following questions:

- * Are our constitutional and administrative traditions which permeate the executive/bureaucratic system congruent with a wider degree of access and participation in public decision-making?
- * Does the Canadian political culture (and by inference the bureaucratic culture) stress equality of legitimate access and participation in public affairs?
- * How is access legitimized in the executive/bureaucratic system of Ontario and what are the costs of legitimation?
- * What is the main thrust and direction of the currently instituted organizational engineering in the Government of Ontario? Does it aim at some degree of the redistribution of access or not?

II. CANADIAN CONSTITUTIONAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE TRADITIONS

Harry Eckstein wrote that:

British politicians strike a remarkable balance between dogmatism and pragmatism in their behaviour. They behave like ideologists in regard to rules of procedure and like pragmatists in regard to policies.²

It would appear that Canadians have inherited this ideological posture vis-à-vis procedural rules adding a touch of their own zeal to it. Thus, many constitutional and administrative traditions, which today form part of the Canadian political culture, have acquired deeply symbolic, yet often ambiguous, meaning. Most of them reinforce the conservative, elitist orientation and are strongly incongruent with the participant ethic.

The "Supremacy" of the Legislature

Within the limits of its jurisdiction set out in Section 92 of the British North America Act (as construed and interpreted by Canadian and Imperial courts over the years), the legislature of Ontario is supreme. Whatever the technical or constitutional meaning of this term may be, it represents a statement of value or norm which posits that the legislative process ought to be the highest political process, and the legislature the highest political institution in a democratic system. If the norm and the reality are far apart, the situation may create a burden, a strain or a kind of 'cognitive dissonance' in the public mind. This can be avoided by changing a clear prescriptive norm into an ambiguous symbol. Thus, while the legislative process no longer plays

2. Harry Eckstein, "A Theory of Stable Democracy", Center for International Studies, Princeton University, 1961.

a significant, substantive role in the business of governing; major policies are formulated and implemented with only a superficial input from the elected sector; and the information and capability gap between governmental bureaucracy and the elected representatives increases, and yet the public appears to continue to believe that:

- * the electoral process is meaningful and sufficient;
- * the administrative system is inferior, does not possess an autonomous status, and remains under the control of the legislature;
- * the citizens delegate their right to participate in the business of governing to a professional policy-making elite which is fully accountable and responsible.

Clearly, the supremacy rule understood as a political symbol rather than a constitutional norm, supports and sustains the status quo electoral politics, and rejects participatory beliefs and attitudes.

The "Magic" of Federalism

British constitutional lawyers who invented modern federalism were positivists. They thought of their invention strictly as a form of legal engineering. In Canada, on the other hand, federalism has been elevated to the rank of ideology. It now firmly forms part of the Canadian political culture. If, however, one attempts to assess the impact of the federal structure on the life of the country, concrete results are not easy to find. In a lengthy process of constitutional and political development, Canadian federalism has undergone a dramatic decentralization since 1867. Canadian provinces, particularly

Quebec and Ontario, exercise today power and influence unparalleled with those enjoyed by the constituent units of any other federal system in the world. At the same time, a sizeable minority of Quebec's population feels that its rights and aspirations are inadequately provided for and that decentralized federalism is as oppressive as a unitary state would be. These minority perceptions and the intensity with which they are held cast a doubt on the claims made for the federal system. The belief that federalism ipso facto promotes regional autonomy and protects the rights and aspirations of minorities and ethnic groups has helped for a long time to keep such minorities and ethnic groups in their respective places. Riker³ argued strongly that federalism is highly congruent with elitism, and that it could lead to minority rule. Moreover, the personal costs of political participation in a federal state are high for the following reasons:

- * The rules of the game are often complex and vary from region to region.
- * The qualifications for full participatory status are often arbitrary and determined by ethnic, linguistic, or other local requirements.
- * The unavoidable jurisdictional questions often impose uncertainty and ambiguity and thus discourage participant action.

Finally, under the auspices of the grand theory of decentralized federalism, the process of federal-provincial bargaining ascends to the level of international diplomacy wrapped in secrecy and high intrigue. It necessarily

3. William H. Riker, Federalism: Origin, Operation, Significance, Boston, 1964.

rejects any claims for the validity of meaningful participatory action.

The Golden Rule of Secrecy

This rule postulates the idea that secrecy is a moral duty towards one's colleagues, and that when "men engaged in a common cause come together for the purpose of reaching an agreement, they usually succeed, providing their differences of opinion are not made public".⁴ It stems from the ancient notion that government business is Crown business and thus not ipso facto open to public scrutiny.⁵ Although many of the ancient privileges and immunities of the Crown have been abolished, the tradition of conducting governmental business as if it were a private affair known only to the privileged "insiders", remains in effect and is closely guarded.

The practical aspects of the rule, which are obvious and undeniable, remain buried under the heap of symbolic labels: 'only for the eyes of the Minister', 'top secret', 'secret', 'confidential', 'privileged', etc. Official secrets faithfully follow the hierarchy of bureaucratic organization. But, the behavioural consequences of this preoccupation with symbols are more subtle: formation of critical judgments is discouraged; maintenance of quiescent attitudes is encouraged; collegiality and consensus are favoured over conflict and active participation.

4. Lawrence Lowell, "The Government of England", Vol. 1, 1914, pp. 65-66. as quoted by James R. Mallory in The Structure of Canadian Government, p. 91.

5. The "question period" and the rules governing production of documents in the House constitute the only exceptions.

Neutrality and Responsibility of the Bureaucratic Sector

In one sense, the public servant is supposed to be politically neutral because he is not politically responsible. According to the myth, the bureaucratic sector does not exist as an autonomous political sub-system. It merely constitutes an extension of the Ministry hired by it to do a job. The legal relationship between the Crown represented by the Ministry and the bureaucracy is that of master and servant. The latter owes no responsibility except to the master, and need not be concerned with such issues as political participation or political responsiveness. The master bears full vicarious responsibility for his servant and, theoretically, can be forced to account for all his bureaucratic wrongdoings before the Legislature. This responsibility is theoretical because real condemnation of the master is impossible without his consent. If the opposition side, frustrated by the hollowness of the responsibility rule, begins a hunt for the head of the wrongdoer, the master summons a moral duty to protect him on the ground that the servant's political neutrality must not be put in jeopardy and exposed to partisan contamination. Stephen Clarkson wrote recently that:

. . . the technocrat's dilemma is not having any clear responsibility to the public. It is no longer possible for him to pretend not to make political choices. The question is whether the bureaucrat and the consultant will continue to operate in a private little world or whether their world can be made public.⁶

Clearly, the unmentioned aims of the neutrality and responsibility rules are: to protect the bureaucratic sector from the scrutiny of the legislature; to

6. Stephen Clarkson, "The Technocrat's Role in Politics", The Globe and Mail, September 14, 1971.

isolate it from the public; and to inject it with a non-partisan, non-political, zero ethic. Only then will the public official be free to engage in the "rational contemplation of objectives", leaving the "intuitive (political) perceptions of the needs of the community" to the politician.⁷

7. A.W. Johnson, "PPB and Decision-Making in the Government of Canada", an Address delivered on June 18, 1970 to the 50th Anniversary Conference of the Society of Industrial Accountants in Toronto.

III. PARTICIPANT ORIENTATION IN CANADIAN POLITICAL CULTURE

The Mainstream Political Culture

Is there a participant orientation in Canadian political culture? If so, is it a dominant orientation or not? Is it possible to speculate about orientational change at the mass level on the basis of recently conducted empirical studies? If the political decision-makers of Ontario perceive that the pressure for greater citizen involvement is increasing, then surely these demands must reflect an on-going cultural ferment in the Province, and possibly elsewhere in Canada. Assuming that bureaucratic political culture, as a segment of elite culture, is both anti-participant (*vis-à-vis* the outsiders) and participant (*vis-à-vis* the insiders), does the mainstream political culture reinforce or weaken these attitudes?

John Porter, writing in the spring of 1969, long after the "quiet revolution" of Quebec and almost concurrently with the new wave of nationalist feeling in Ontario, characterized the mainstream political culture in Canada as follows:

English and French Canadians are more alike in their conservatism, traditionalism, religiosity, authoritarianism and elitist values than the spokesmen for either group are prepared to admit. They have been drawn together in a mutual defense of these cultural elements in North America and some of the more articulate of them look out on a world of social change including the Americanization of their own society with much the same ambivalence and fear. Conservatism is, of course, a general quality of all social structure, because behaviour patterns are habitual, but in modern industrial societies, there is also, in the interest of adaptability, a readiness for change, a readiness which may be stronger in elites than in the mass population. In Canada this conservatism characterizes elites

as well as the mass of the population and pervades most of its institutions to a greater degree than in the United States.⁸

Porter then sees no distinction between Canadian elite and mass cultures.

Both are status quo oriented and participant only in the electoral sense.

John Meisel's study, conducted after the 1968 general election, and based on a representative sample of the Canadian electorate, revealed that 75% of the respondents perceived voting as the only way people can have any say about how the government runs things. The same percentage of the respondents viewed politics and government generally as complicated and beyond an average man's understanding. At the same time, approximately 60% of the respondents approved the proposition that people with university degrees should occupy government positions to a greater extent than others. About 80% of the respondents stated that they were satisfied with their lives, satisfied with their financial situations, and happy with their prospects for the future. Professor Meisel concluded that an average Canadian voter (as a member of the mainstream political culture) is highly content, order loving, status quo oriented, and a materially satisfied individual. He sees no danger in the future and shows no intention of departing from his established, secure forms of behaviour.⁹

In his recent study of political participation in Canada, Richard Van Loon offered the following conclusions:

The Canadian political culture, both French and English and without regard for most of the major lines of cleavage, may be described by

8. John Porter, "The Canadian National Character in the Twentieth Century", Cultural Affairs, Spring 1969, p. 50.

9. John Meisel, "The 1968 Canadian Election Survey", mimeographed data and analysis.

the term - spectator/participant. This seemingly contradictory term is chosen for a number of reasons. First, relative to most democratic countries, Canadians do have a high level of political participation. We must, therefore, describe it as a participant culture, but this should not deceive one into believing that there is a uniformly high level of participation in Canada. In particular, we saw that lower socio-economic groups are virtually excluded from most aspects of political life, except in those relatively infrequent cases where people have picked up a high level of interest in politics. Indeed, in any meaningful sense, those 30-40% of Canadians who are below or near "the poverty line" are excluded from the input side of the political process, and consequently must take whatever output comes their way with very little control over them. However, it might be a mistake to assume they will remain the "silent poor". With increasing levels of education, they may slowly become politically mobilized, especially if, as in Quebec in the late 1960s, job opportunities and real avenues of influence over politics are not available to them. If they do not participate within the context of the "legitimate" political process, that is, in ways which (whether effective or not) have become traditional in politics, they will be forced to become involved in "illegitimate" ways. Unless the system adapts, it will collapse.¹⁰

These findings appear to confirm the view that, short of a large scale economic or social deprivation, the mainstream political culture in Canada is not likely to undergo a substantial change in the forthcoming decade. It will, in all probability, continue to be devoted exclusively to electoral politics and party politics and will consistently reject all other forms of citizen participation. Political decision-makers will continue to be able to rely on the mainstream political culture for their support. In some instances, they may perceive a need for symbolic gestures on their part aimed at the diffusion of the demands for more citizen involvement emanating from the non-mainstream sector. But they will also be well aware that if they increase the level of responsiveness towards a minority, such action

10. Richard Van Loon, "Political Participation in Canada: The 1965 Election", Canadian Journal of Political Science, September, 1970, pp. 396-97.

is likely to be strongly opposed by the mainstream sector fearful of any loss of its dominant position.

The Minority, Urban Counter-Culture

The strength of the minority, urban counter-culture is a relatively new phenomenon in Canadian politics. This phenomenon is centred around the principal urban areas of Ontario richly sprinkled with new and old university communities and with pockets of young, (and not so young), culturally oriented, members of the middle class. As urbanization of these areas progresses, and the university communities become larger and more integrated with their environments, the counter-culture is likely to grow in size, influence, and prestige. The minority, urban counter-culture appears to contain two behavioural traits closely related to each other; first, a highly participant orientation; and second, a widening range of perceived political and social choices both at the individual and collective levels of life.

Professor Van Loon¹¹ hypothesized that a highly participant orientation is a function of three sets of influences or variables; high social, economic and educational status; good personality resources; and a superior sense of political efficacy - all culminating in a high level of interest in politics.

A widening range of perceived political and social goals is increasingly expressed in the ideological aspirations of the urban counter-culture:

11. Ibid., p. 380.

- 1) Freeing Canada from the American economy and American socio-cultural domination;
- 2) Developing Canadian national consciousness and a distinct life-style;
- 3) Advancing a non-technological strategy.¹²

It is argued that Ontario can afford objective number one, because a sufficient industrial base has already been successfully built. Objective number two is necessary to strengthen the capacity of Canadians over the long term to free themselves from the embrace of its powerful neighbour. And, objective number three is inseparable from the preceding objective: a non-technological strategy will require a distinct life-style.¹³

In summary, the Ontario mainstream political culture appears to generate little participant pressure and this situation is not likely to change substantially over the next decade. Demands for greater access to the decision-making process, however, on the part of the minority, urban counter-culture, may gather momentum. The political decision-maker's response will probably continue to consist of symbolic gestures and tokenism. This low level of responsiveness will be viewed as consistent with the reliability of the support coming from the mainstream culture, opposed to participant politics.

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12. See Robert Gilpin's brilliant analysis of Canada's technological and cultural choices in "Science Policy for What: Uniqueness of the Canadian Situation", a paper presented at a meeting on Science Policy and Political Science sponsored by the Science Council of Canada, Ottawa, March, 1971.
 13. Robert Gilpin, "Science Policy for What: Uniqueness of the Canadian Situation", and Kari Levitt, Silent Surrender, St. Martin's Press, 1970.

A gap between the widening range of perceived personal choices and the perceived limits of public action may become the source of some turmoil which, in the absence of a severe social or economic deprivation, is not likely to lead to major consequences.

IV. THE EXECUTIVE/BUREAUCRATIC SYSTEM: THE LIMITS OF ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION

The act of political involvement or participation requires the presence of two essential pre-conditions: first, a "participant-orientation" (sometimes also called the "psychological propensity to act"); and second, an appropriate, supportive political setting. I now turn to the analysis of the political setting, that is of the executive/bureaucratic system in the Government of Ontario. Does the administrative system offer any realistic possibility for participant action? Does it constitute an appropriate and supportive setting congruent with participatory action from outside? What are the conditions of access to the system? Or, who gets in, how, and when?

The System and its Clients

The Ontario administrative system may be described as a complex multi-unit organization designed to convert inputs into outputs. It maintains an intimate link with the Cabinet system and a loose and less clearly defined relationship with the Legislative system. The inputs consist of demands for policies and programmes, human and material resources, and doses of moral support, opposition and indifference. The demands may come from the "clients", from other interest groups, from members of the general public, and (as most frequently occurs), from within the government sector itself. Each input represents a mixture of these three broad elements - demands, resources, and supports. The conversion process transforms the mixture into outputs - that is, into public services, laws and regulations aiming at the control of human behaviour, or into symbolic gestures and statements produced by the administrative

elite and intended to reinforce public quiescence and public support of the system.¹⁴

Technically, the bureaucratic system is not "responsible" to the people of Ontario, and therefore it need not be responsive to them. Yet, it traditionally supports a network of "clientele" organizations which maintain close and routinized relations with specific departments and administrative agencies of the Government. For example, can anyone doubt that the public servants working in the Industrial Development Branch of the Department of Trade and Development and the "private" officials employed by the Canadian Manufacturers Association share very similar attitudes and beliefs with respect to most issues of common concern? An analogous attitudinal relationship would appear to prevail as well, for example, between the Engineering Division personnel of the Department of Highways and the organized entrepreneurs of the road construction industry.

Professor Presthus in his recent empirical study of the interaction between interest groups and Ontario Government officials confirms that "most bureaucrats tend to have sympathetic relations with their clientele groups". He continues:

Such groups are regarded as both highly legitimate and effectual by about half of our sample . . . This controverts the classical image of the official in the parliamentary system as an anonymous and impartial instrument, motivated essentially by legal-rational prescriptions . . . Instead, we find a substantial

14. This section is based upon Sharkansky's model of the public administration system. See Ira Sharkansky, Public Administration, Chicago: Markham Publishing Co., 1970, pp. 3-9.

proportion of officials bound closely to their clientele associates by common normative and functional perspectives.¹⁵

The Conditions of Legitimate Access

Effective participation hinges on access to the system. A demand represents the first stage of citizen/administrator interaction at the boundary of the bureaucratic system. Legitimacy determines the success of the initial interaction. If a demand does not appear to be prima facie legitimate, it must be legitimized, or it will fail to gain access. Competing demands may be granted different degrees of legitimacy. Those originating either from within the governmental sector or from high status "clients" are likely to enter the conversion process without much difficulty or hindrance. Demands issuing from other (non-clientele) organized interests may or may not be legitimized. Demands identified with unstructured, issue oriented, ad hoc groups which lack continuity, and from low status individuals face an insurmountable barrier.

Legitimacy of demands is established through mutual role-taking performed both by the "insiders" (public administrators) and the "outsiders" (the competing participants). Each of them must be capable of stepping into the shoes of the other and of examining the issue as if he were the other. Mutual role-taking¹⁶ in an organizational setting can succeed only when the

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15. Robert Presthus, Elite Accommodation in Canadian Politics, Cambridge University Press, to be published later in 1972. I am indebted to Professor Presthus for letting me read portions of his manuscript.
 16. see Murray Edelman, The Symbolic Uses of Politics, University of Illinois Press, 1970, pp. 48-51.

patterns of the two roles to be reversed are congruent or resemble each other. An attempt to reverse incongruent roles imposes an atmosphere of threat and leads to severe psychological strain. We refer to bureaucratic structure as "rigid" because it is exclusively composed of one-pattern roles which share the following characteristics:

- * precisely defined rights and duties;
- * precisely defined areas of competence and responsibility;
- * precisely defined lines of subordination and superordination.

The system will refuse participation (access) to anyone whose role pattern differs from its own. Through the device of role-taking and legitimation, the system protects its own structure and minimized the risk of outside threat. Given the degree of rigidity possessed by the bureaucratic structure, it is extremely unlikely that reforms in the nature of organizational engineering would be successful in significantly opening up access. An experimental introduction of radically different role patterns would most likely be short lived. The system would either absorb them, or reject them; it could not afford to risk destruction or disintegration.

Participation and Responsiveness

Prescriptive theories stressing participant democratic values often neglect to take into account the fact that participation is impossible without responsiveness. To speak of participation is to imply that something "out there" exists which is open to participation. The notion of participation, therefore, presumes a degree of responsiveness on the part of the something "out there".

Thus, rather than discussing participation in isolation, it is more appropriate to consider participation/responsiveness as an interactional sequence between the "insiders" (participants by definition) and the "outsiders". When we say that a decisional unit is unresponsive, or that there is pressure from the outside for greater participation, we mean that the formal rules governing access have become inadequate. These rules serve two purposes: to limit excessive access which, if permitted, would destroy the decisional unit; and to facilitate a degree of access which, if not allowed, would cut the unit off from the reality outside. Total participation equals total responsiveness and means the destruction of structure; no participation equals no responsiveness and means absolute sublimation of structure. In other words, participation can be understood as a degree of access viewed by those outside of the decisional unit, while responsiveness can be understood as a degree of access viewed by those inside the unit. The rules governing access become inadequate when there is a wide gap between these two perceptions. It should be noted that the participation/responsiveness interaction is not an objective but a perceptual phenomenon for both parties - the insiders as well as the outsiders; and that, given the definition of the situation, perfect congruence or match between these two perceptions is impossible. If a wide gap does develop and becomes manifest to all concerned, would the insiders respond with a call for a new set of rules to liberalize access?

As mentioned earlier, the insiders' view of access (responsiveness) is largely a function of their roles within the decisional unit. The roles are structures around specific rights and duties and associated with particular status positions within the unit. Thus, if the unit members were experts or

professional men (for example, lawyers, economists, or systems analysts), their view of access (vis-à-vis the outsiders) would be precisely formulated, strictly consistent with the competence and the jurisdiction of the unit, and thus relatively narrow. Clearly, a status position achieved through personal effort, competition, special abilities, knowledge and skill, when shared with others within the context of a decisional unit constitutes a single, most important determinant of responsiveness, that is, of the degree of access that the unit members are prepared to grant. If participatory pressure develops in disproportion to the insiders view of access, they are very likely to perceive it as a direct threat to their own status positions, and indirectly to the viability of the unit itself. The following passage illustrates my point:

The third party in this dialogue is the public servant . . . his professional qualifications and experience have trained him to explore the possibility of the future, and to consider the alternative courses of action . . . he must be prepared to advocate the public interest as he sees it, but in the final analysis, he must accept the decision of the politicians and work within the limitations of political values which they set . . . (But) if the elected official chooses to listen to or be intimidated by the local faction in contradiction to the public servant, the latter feels not only personally betrayed and rejected, but also believes that the good of the community, which he always maintains, is best guarded by and known to him, has been surrendered for the benefit of the few.¹⁷

High status positions thus appear to be incongruent with a wide view of access (responsiveness) in a bureaucratic setting. At the same time, such positions are believed to be essential if the decisional unit is to achieve a high level of effectiveness and performance. In general terms,

17. W. Wronsky, "The Public Servant and Protest Groups", Canadian Public Administration, Spring 1971, Vol. 14, p. 71.

therefore, increasing professionalism, expertise, and occupational status among the members of the public service are unlikely to lead towards greater responsiveness. Indeed, in the future, the executive/bureaucratic policy-makers will probably be less open and less prepared to grant access to "illegitimate" outsiders than they are today.

V. RECENT ORGANIZATIONAL ENGINEERING IN THE GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO

The Normative Thrust

It is apparent that we are entering into a new era in public administration and in public decision-making, both at the federal and provincial levels. It is a period characterized by a high degree of optimism at the elite level, a conviction that powerful analytic and technological capabilities are fundamentally transforming the decision-making process and thus vastly improving the quality and the effectiveness of the decisions themselves. For the first time, the optimists argue, the governments have the tools to do the job. It is, therefore, their moral duty to use them to the fullest. This normative imperative is dictated by the sensing of an increasing interdependence and complexity of events which many believe will impose progressively heavier burdens on governmental decision-makers and administrators. If we do not begin now, if we do not anticipate and plan comprehensively, we will permanently eliminate many of the desirable "possible futures" leaving only the second rate alternatives for our children and our childrens' children to pursue and experience.

There is a continual dying of possible futures, and two mistakes are common: to be unaware of them while they are alive, and to be unaware of their death when they have been killed off by the lack of discovery.¹⁸

Marion J. Levy puts it this way:

As interdependency increases, the probability that any particular stupidity will have increased large catastrophic implications also

18. De Jouvenel, quoted in Wilkinson, "Futuribles, Innovation and Stability", Centre Diary, The Fund of the Republic, Santa Barbara, March-April, 1967, p. 18.

mounts. If the curve of knowledge falls below the curve of requisite knowledge, avoidance of catastrophe is a function of luck.¹⁹

And we can add to these statements an excerpt from the "Speech From the Throne" delivered on October 8, 1970 in Ottawa.

It is an age in which life-support systems of the biosphere may collapse unless man reverses his present course and begins again to live in harmony rather than in competition with his environment. It is an age in which the forces of science and technology now in motion are so massive, so swift and so comprehensive that man may be facing his last opportunity to control his own destiny rather than be subject to it . . . Man can no longer afford the luxury of reacting to events. He must anticipate and plan.²⁰

The Ontario Committee on Government Productivity in its Interim Report expressed a similar concern using somewhat less colourful but equally strong language. It foresaw "revolutionary circumstances and issues quite different from those with which any government has had to deal with in the relatively evolutionary decades in the past." It recommended a universal approach to problems and suggested that government must "anticipate change rather than merely react to it . . ."²¹ In an earlier Report the Committee stated that "Government must become bigger and involved in problems of increasing magnitude".²²

19. Marion J. Levy, "Does it Matter if he is Naked? Bawled the Child", in K. Knorr and J. Roseneau, Contending Approaches to International Politics, Princeton, 1969, p. 90.

20. "Speech From the Throne", Third Session, 28th Parliament, October 8, 1970.

21. Committee on Government Productivity, Interim Report # 2, March, 1971, p. 7.

22. Committee on Government Productivity, Interim Report # 1, December, 1970, p. 6.

The notions of abundance and growth and, therefore, of a relatively unrestricted freedom to pursue divergent and conflicting social and economic goals without prior calculation and ongoing controls appear to be no longer accepted. In their place emerge the ideas of scarcity and rationality as currently dominant themes preoccupying those concerned with the economic future of the North American continent. "Scarcity", writes Edward Shils, "combined with rationality and efficiency imposes the notion of priority and leads to a decisional technique called the 'optimal allocation of resources among preferred objectives.'"²³ Superenthusiasts are already beginning to think in terms of "Promethean aspirations".

The notion that a whole society could be planned deliberately in a way that could shape it for a long time to come presupposes not only a pervasive knowledge of the present state of society but also the ability to foresee the subsequent behaviour of its component parts.²⁴

The direction of the normative thrust is unmistakable: efficiency, rationality, comprehensiveness, control, planning, anticipation, etc. These are the central or core "values" which determine the new ethos of the public decision-making process. All of these concepts belong to the category of devices through the application or utilization of which other, substantive values may be obtained. Paradoxically however, it is precisely these procedures and techniques which are held in the highest esteem and elevated to the summit as moral and ethical precepts. Technological rationality by the force of its own dialectic imposes a procedural normative ethos on governmental policy-makers.²⁵

23. Edward Shils (ed.), Criteria for Scientific Development - Public Policy and National Goals, M.I.T. Press, 1968, Introduction.

24. Ibid., Introduction.

25. see Jacques Ellul, The Technological Order, Carl F. Stover (ed.), Wayne State University Press, 1963.

The Organizational and Procedural Innovations

Clearly the most important innovation in the field of decision-making and policy formulation in the Government of Ontario will be the development and use of new human and technological capabilities without which anticipatory planning and rational control are impossible. These capabilities require a setting which is congruent and supportive; in other words, a rational/technological setting capable of generating an on-going process of adaptation and organizational change. If the present structures of government and present procedures are perceived to result in growth overlaps, inefficiency, and inadequate handling of problems, they must be reshaped and remade; new structures must be created and grafted on the existing ones. Outdated, non-rational procedures must be replaced with new 'total' procedural systems which can prescribe every step in the arduous task of decision-making, whether in the area of resource allocation, or strategy determination. The principle of technological rationality must become omnipresent throughout the system and the process.

With these perspectives in mind, the Ontario Government Committee on Productivity embarked on its mission of structural reform and reorganization. Established in December of 1969, it is expected to complete its work by the end of 1971. It is also expected that most of its recommendations will be accepted and implemented by the government. The main features of this organizational engineering can be identified as follows:

- * The governmental policy-making activity is divided into specialized, functionally defined issue-areas called Policy Fields: Social Development, Environment and Resources Development, and Justice.

- * The Cabinet is divided into small, highly integrated, executive/bureaucratic decisional units corresponding to the Policy Fields and chaired by Policy Ministers.
- * Two new top level (meta-policy) decisional units are created: Policy and Priorities Board chaired by the Premier, and Management Board chaired by a specially designated Cabinet minister. These units are to resolve the questions of objectives, priorities, strategies, jurisdictional conflicts, and the allocation of resources.
- * Each of the new decisional units is to be equipped with highly skilled analytically oriented staff which will gather, analyze, pre-digest and feed information to the decisional units on an on-going basis.
- * All these new components of governmental policy-making machinery are to be fully integrated into a systems network. It seems likely that the central coordinating agency will be established in the Premier's office, perhaps not unlike the P.M.O. in Ottawa. The central coordination, control and support function will, of course, have to be shared between the new Premier's Office and the Cabinet Office.

In a speech delivered before a recently held conference sponsored by the Institute of Public Administration of Canada and devoted to the topic of 'responsive administration', Dr. Thomas McLeod²⁶ of C.I.D.A. commented on these

26. I am indebted to Dr. McLeod for making available to me the text of his address.

organizational changes as follows:

I now turn to a section drawn from page 2 of the Interim Report Number Two of the Ontario Committee on Government Productivity under the heading "Benefits Resulting From the Recommendations". Here we run into some of the juiciest phrases designed for some time to tickle the palate of the scientific administrators dedicated to rationality, objectivity and science in decision-making:

'our recommendations will have the following benefits:

- adding both precision and speed to the decision-making process of the Cabinet as a whole;
- giving individuals and Cabinet the precise information which they need in order to make the right choice between conflicting policies and programs;
- increasing the ability of ministers and Cabinet as a whole to process a large volume of decisions on the basis of thoroughly researched and complete information.

All these benefits to the decision-making body also represent real benefits to the public, since they imply better and more responsive service to the public.'

Only a cad could take exception to anything so dedicated to truth, science and precision. Yet I think I must, if only to use these phrases as examples of the problem that worries me. To me such phrases imply only responsiveness to technology . . .

Clearly, the direction of the currently instituted organizational engineering in the Government of Ontario is unmistakable and its principal aims are as follows:

- * To meet the stringent and growing demands of technological rationality through a process of organizational adaptation;
- * To strengthen the Ontario Government's capability, prestige and potential influence in federal/provincial bargaining;
- * To increase the efficiency and the productivity of the executive/bureaucratic system as a processor of decisions.

It is most interesting to note the striking resemblance between the organizational engineering taking place currently in the Government of Ontario and the structural and procedural reforms introduced in Ottawa since 1968.²⁷

In their attempts to effect a greater centralization and coordination of the policy-making activity dictated by the delegation of certain powers of decision to the functional, specialized committees, the governments face an insurmountable dilemma, a fundamental contradiction between the imperatives of technological rationality and accompanying it, procedural ethos, and such values as increased openness and wider access to the policy-making units, greater governmental responsiveness and public participation. I submit that this contradiction cannot be resolved. Technological rationality demands the eventual creation of a totally integrated decisional system, centrally controlled and coordinated, and capable of generating an on-going process of organizational adaptation. In such a system, the goals of efficiency, effectiveness and productivity would dominate over all other values, including those of participation, openness and wider access to public policy-making.

27. see Szablowski, "The Optimal Policy-Making System" in Hockin's Apex of Power, Prentice Hall, 1971; Robertson, "The Changing Role of the Privy Council Office", C.P.A., Vol. 14, Winter 1971; Lalonde, "The Changing Role of the Prime Minister's Office", Ibid.; and Johnson, "The Treasury Board of Canada and the Machinery of Government of the 1970's", CJPS, Vol. 4, September, 1971.

VI. SUMMARY OF THE ARGUMENT

The question with which this paper is principally concerned is as follows: What are the prospects for increased public participation in the executive/bureaucratic system of the Government of Ontario? Participation in this context is defined as a redistribution of legitimate access to the governmental decision-making units in the direction of equality and away from monopolistic concentration. The foregoing analysis of the constitutional and administrative traditions, of the cultural environment, of the executive/bureaucratic system with its clientele satellites, of the recently engineered reorganization of the central policy-making apparatus leads to the following conclusions:

- * Continually nurtured beliefs in the supremacy of the legislative process, in the 'magic' of federalism, in the necessity for executive and administrative secrecy, and in the political neutrality and responsibility of the bureaucratic sector stand in the way of the development of a participatory theory of public decision-making.
- * The mainstream political culture does not stress equality of legitimate access to public decisional units; it requires a low intensity of participatory political commitment and places a light psychological burden on the citizen, consistent with the tenets of electoral politics. It seems unlikely that the intensely participant minority urban counter-culture will succeed in forcing anything but token gestures from the executive/bureaucratic sector (e.g. the Spading reversal).

- * Access to the decisional units of the executive/bureaucratic system continues to be governed by the process of demand legitimation subject to the prevailing structural and orientational conformism. Periodic token gestures of open access do not appear to affect the basic rules of the game, but they do mobilize some political support for the decision-makers. (e.g. again the Spadina affair)

- * Organizational engineering cannot result in increased public participation (ie. the redistributive equalization of legitimate access to public decisional units) if its principal objectives are efficiency, effectiveness and productivity and if its normative ethos is confined to the procedural and technological values. The high premium afforded to specialization, analytic skills, professionalization and systems orientation in the executive/bureaucratic system suggest that legitimate access to public decisional units will be more restricted in the future.

VII. EPILOGUE: THE FUTURE OF PARTICIPATORY POLITICS IN ONTARIO

Participatory politics refers to a form of legitimate collective action directed at public (including corporate) decisional units and aiming at permanent or temporary access to them in order to influence their decisions. The popularity of participatory politics is likely to grow in Ontario, particularly among the members of the minority, urban counter-culture. In time, this relatively new form of political activity may acquire a limited authoritative recognition. It will be largely focused on municipal, educational, and community institutions, on locally situated corporations and service agencies, on regional, provincial and federal bureaus, and on other infrastructure group and corporate units. In each case, it will be possible to identify three crucial elements of participatory politics:

- * a burning issue;
- * location of decisional unit competent to deal with the issue;
- * a real or anticipated impact of the issue or of its consequences on the members of the participatory political group or on those whom they represent.

It can be expected that from time to time the members of the participatory political group will succeed in gaining access to the decisional unit and will extract from it the desired decision. These instances, however, are unlikely to have a significant and enduring influence on the Ontario political system generally and on the executive/bureaucratic policy-making process in particular. The legitimacy of political leadership in Canada continues to depend on the deeply felt, symbolic attachment to electoral politics. The act of voting appears to reveal to many people a mysterious link between 'them' and the political

system, a key to the destiny of the land. 'They' will never stop voting, even if shown conclusive evidence that there is absolutely no relationship between the ballot and the policy, each belonging to a separate and distinct domain of collective activity.

It is evident that electoral politics requires a relatively low intensity of participatory commitment and places a light psychological burden on the citizen. This is entirely consistent with the uniquely Canadian democratic elitism set in a regionalized federal framework where:

Bargains can be made and compromises reached among political leaders which would not be possible if they required popular ratification. . . For the masses, all that is required is that they be committed to their own subcultures and that they trust and support their respective leaders.²⁸

The need for a highly intense political involvement is not widespread among the Canadian public. It may be that Canadians are not prepared to accept high and demanding standards for political behaviour because they fear that "what is one man's overeagerness will become another's alienation."²⁹

28. S.J.R. Noel, "The Prime Minister's Role in a Consociational Democracy", in T.A. Hockin, Apex of Power; Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1971, p. 103.

29. Erving Goffman, Interaction Ritual, Anchor Books, 1967, p. 123.

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